

# Alexander Cockburn at FFF Conference 2008, 1 of 6

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBxC48liHml> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBxC48liHml>)

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Alexander Cockburn on "Imperial Crusades: The Corruption of U.S. Foreign Policy" at the Future of Freedom Foundation's <http://fff.org> Restoring the Republic, 2008.

Alexander Cockburn, The Nation's "Beat the Devil" columnist and one of America's best-known radical journalists, was born in Scotland and grew up in Ireland. He graduated from Oxford in 1963 with a degree in English literature and language.

Playlist of Cockburn's lecture: [http://www.youtube.com/view\\_play\\_list?p=1846D10C9E23F23E](http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=1846D10C9E23F23E)

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Alexander Coburn is co-editor of counterpunch one of the hardest-hitting liberal websites on the Internet it's one of the websites that I go to every single morning especially they're fantastic articles on foreign policy and civil liberties yeah Alexander's one of the country's best-known radical journalists with a regular column for the nation called beat the devil he was born in Scotland he graduated from Oxford with a degree in English literature and language his articles have appeared in the Village Voice the New York Review of Books Harper's Magazine Atlantic Monthly and The Wall Street Journal where he had a regular column from 1980 to 1990 he has authored and edited several books including corruption of Empire white out the CIA drugs in the press and imperial Crusades the title of Alexander's talk is Imperial Crusades the corruption of u.s. foreign policy Alexander Coburn they'll give you 15 minute one well I'm delighted to be here part of the libertarian outreach program this is not my first go-around as kind of lefty token Justin had me to a conference in San Mateo I don't know it must have been almost a decade ago I got a lot of stick from the left for consorting openly with Pat Buchanan it still happened but cannon spoken the day before I spoke but

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cannon spoken the day before I spoke but I guess the sort of sulfuric presence of mr. Buchanan had contaminated the purity of my left-wing vestments so what could I bring to this gathering might be useful to you folks of course been here for a couple of days enjoyed the speeches and what do I represent when in my days on the journal I was invited by the late Robert Bartley and Peter can to be the left mad dog in 1980 80 through 90 I think the idea was that if I ran on the op-ed through every three weeks they could say we represent all points of view they were a bit more open to and it's tough than they are now the current Wall Street Journal I said when Rupert Murdoch took it over it was the only paper he'd ever took an era where he was slightly to the left of the editorial position I think it's impossible to be in more insane than Paul Gigot you're gonna come up with someone I know but it's tough it's kind of about the same certainly enough about the same size as anti-war dot-com we have about a hundred thousand eighty to a hundred thousand unique viewers a day as a guy who started his career of left-wing extremism handing leaflets to USAF truck drivers outside a nuclear base in Oxfordshire in the 50s where you'd hand up your leaflet the guy would look at it and throw it back in your face or throw it over the edge of the truck and you'd be thanking a good day if you've got rid of fifty or a

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day if you've got rid of fifty or a hundred leaflets by the end of the day without being run over now at the end of the month the internet being what it is you can look and see where your audience figures were and you can find that you were read on 30 by 30 thousand people on US military bases no truck driver throwing it down there sitting there looking at your website so yeah there has been a revolution and I think people like anti-war the libertarians and counterpunch if we pass is some sort of representative of the left have profited immeasurably thereby and of course one of the reasons I think we do well as opposed to the incredibly boring nation magazine very Swift path to sleep in my opinion although I've written for it for 25 years is that we do entertain other points of view people always make a point of saying we are open to all points of view the more they say it the less true it is most people are absolutely immune to other points of view than their own absolutely totally immune the left as much if not more than any the left idea of a meeting is to form a circle point the guns in wood and then fire I was a bit amused to hear Justin take a swipe at deviation is among the left and I have to say then spend 25 minutes trashing your your bitter opponents are in the libertarian movement I thought boy he's becoming a leftie tell you you know Lenin probably not your favorite guy Lenin very compulsive fellow when he was living in Zurich his wife groups Gaia said you know Vladimir you're just working all the time you're working like a dog and you really need to take the day off now letting said I don't know I've got this

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letting said I don't know I've got this to do I've got to write what is to be done I've got to write a couple of manifestos and so on she said oh forget it let's go up in the mountains so they went up and their little up a little mountain and it had the picnic box and they spread out the picnic boss and she noticed even as she was spreading out their delicacies but he was looking moodily into the middle distance wasn't enjoying himself and finally turn right he said god damn those mensheviks that was Lenin he could never get it off his mind of course the Mensheviks if you're interested in this thing or ultimately their descendants when they came to America became the neo-cons so he was right to be worried but he should have enjoyed the picnic it should be inscribed on the in on every movement enjoyed the picnic so we a counterpunch that fairly early on noticed that two are somewhat dismayed that the libertarian writers are pretty popular you know we have Paul Craig Roberts who's a libertarian Ben you know and at the end of the month do you rack up which of the most visited articles and it's kind of Craig Roberts Craig Roberts Craig Roberts Craig Roberts and then another guy called Mike Whitney Mike Whitney lives up in state of Washington predicts the complete collapse of capitalism on a twice weekly basis I called him up I said Mike I'm gonna give you one a month only one a month for collapse of capitalism if you go over one month you're gonna have one less the following month he says but it's happening it's happening I said I know it's been happening for a long time just take your time and what we decided that the points of common unity are pretty obvious anti-war

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common unity are pretty obvious anti-war and pro civil liberties and pro freedom people oddly enough react favorably when given good articles on this topic and that is our measure what we've also noticed the other day Seymour Hersh noted journalist called up my brother Andrew who lives in Washington angrily and he said why did you give that piece about the latest Bush he had a great article about three weeks ago saying that Bush had signed a secret finding oh it must be about two months ago now expanding the secret war against Iran you know this is this is funding groups inside Iran campaign of assassination the campaign against Hezbollah in Lebanon which met with disaster but a month ago and Andrew got it completely right and Seymour was wild because he'd obviously been writing the same article and then the checker at The New Yorker brought him the one in counterpunched and said oh they published it already which usually doesn't stop Seymour from claiming a scoop but what struck me and I looked it up for under I said you know you've had a million people read this article on our site which is nice and I was glad to tell him that well the larger truth for us is that the mainstream press is dying you can just look it's dying in front of our eyes all my life I've been hoping for this day thinking a hope against hope I wish the New York Times would shrivel up and die and you know like the little boy who when the earthquake occurs right when she says I hope the school's gonna fall down

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